Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A stainless steel structural member for a blockformer apparatus, which structural member has at least one surface along which, in operation, curd slides,

wherein at least part of the at least one surface is a micropeened surface having substantially sloping undulations when viewed on a microscopic scale, said surface having been obtained through a micropeening treatment.

2. A stainless steel structural member according to claim 1, wherein the micropeening treatment has been carried out with stainless steel balls.

3. A stainless steel structural member according to claim 1, wherein the micropeening treatment has been carried out with substantially undamaged round glass beads.

4. A blockformer apparatus having incorporated therein a stainless steel structural member having at least one surface along which, in operation, curd slides,

wherein at least part of the at least one surface is a micropeened surface having substantially sloping undulations when viewed on a microscopic scale, said surface having been obtained through a micropeening treatment.

5. A blockformer apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising a guillotine blade having a micropeened surface.

6. A blockformer apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising either an elevator platform, or a guide means, or both, having a micropeened surface.

7. A blockformer apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the at least one structural member is a stainless steel drainage tube having an inner micropeened surface.

8. A blockformer apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising a guillotine blade having a micropeened surface.

9. A blockformer apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising either an elevator platform, or a guide means, or both, having a micropeened surface.

10. A method for manufacturing a stainless steel structural member for use in a blockformer apparatus, which structural member has at least one surface along which, in operation, curd moves, comprising:

at least partly finishing the structural member in a conventional manner to obtain a conventional surface roughness; and

subjecting at least part of said at least one surface to a micropeening treatment.

11. A method according to claim 10, wherein said micropeening treatment uses stainless steel balls.

12. A method according to claim 11, wherein said stainless steel balls have a diameter between 50 and 5000 μm.

13. A method according to claim 12, wherein said stainless steel balls have a diameter between 100 and 1500 μm.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein said stainless steel balls have a diameter between 600 and 800 μm.

15. A method according to claim 14, wherein said stainless steel balls have a diameter of approximately 700 μm.

16. A method according to claim 10, wherein said micropeening treatment uses substantially undamaged round glass beads.

17. A method according to claim 16, wherein said stainless steel balls have a diameter between 50 and 5000 µm.

18. A method according to claim 17, wherein said stainless steel balls have a diameter between 100 and 1500 µm.

19. A method according to claim 18, wherein said stainless steel balls have a diameter between 600 and 800 µm.

20. A method according to claim 19, wherein said stainless steel balls have a diameter of approximately 700 µm.